



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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What is expected to be the biggest southward flight of ducks and other migratory waterfowl since 1910 has begun and will probably reach its peak in October, Dr. Ira C. Gabrielson, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, reported to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes today on his return from an inspection of northern breeding grounds.

Dr. Gabrielson said that the southward flight may consist of as many as 150,000,000 individuals, according to his own observations and reports from field representatives of the Service.

The annual southward migration usually begins in August when the males of some species begin to come in. The largest flights, mostly of females and their young, occur in October after storms and cold have driven them from nesting grounds in Alaska and Canada.

"Despite the general increase in the duck population," Dr. Gabrielson declared, "some species still are not showing increases as great as is desired. The diving ducks, particularly the redhead, have been slow in coming back."

The shoal water, or river, ducks such as mallards, pintails, and widgeons have been the leaders among species showing marked increases.

The huge flight of birds coming when there is a shortage of ammunition may create problems in agricultural areas. Some reports of crop damage by congregations of pintails have already come in, Dr. Gabrielson said, but it is believed that such problems can be met by local measures.